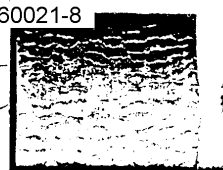


brought this in to me. I thought you might find it interesting.



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USA leaders have brush with history

Their names are not household words but Everett Kinstler, R.O. Skemp, Herbert Abrams, J.H. Sanden and Peter Egell are artists whose works hang in the White House, the State Department or other important government offices in the capital.

All have done portraits of our national leaders.

Every top government official who leaves office — from presidents to cabinet secretaries — usually has his or her portrait painted for posterity. Sometimes the department pays for the portrait. Other times friends or organizations donate a sum for the work.

Only once, for a brief period during the Carter administration, were portraits out. To save money, Carter suggested that photographs would do. But no one took the hint. Somehow a photograph didn't seem right besides its oil-painted predecessors.

And in the last several months, both Carter and former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance bowed to tradition and

WASHINGTON SCENE

By KAREN DEWITT

unveiled oil portraits.

The business of government has sown the capital with hordes of lobbyists and lawyers but federal portrait painting hasn't created a mini-industry.

"There aren't that many portraits that are done," said Ann Fader, director of New York's Portraits Inc.

The firm handles artists such as Sanden, who painted portraits of Sen. Robert Byrd and former Energy Secretary James Schlesinger; Skemp who painted former Transportation Secretary Neal Goldschmidt; and Kinstler, whose portrait of Vance was unveiled last year.

Kinstler is popular among government officials because of what Fader calls his "very bold masculine-style of painting." He also painted portraits of President Ford, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, former Treasury Secretary



By Tim Olson, Special for USA TODAY
ARTIST AT WORK: Peter Egell works on portrait of Nevius M. Curtis, president of the Delmarva Power and Light Co., based in Wilmington, Del.

John Connolly, former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and former Commerce Secretary Elliot Richardson.

For the State Department and the White House, curator Clement Conger often assists in the selection of artists to do federally commissioned work.

"Everything is completely confidential," said Conger, because occasionally an official will not like the finished portrait.

That's what happened with noted Boston artist Gardiner Cox's 1978 portrait of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. The painting did not please Kissinger, even though he had selected the artist himself.

Another artist, J. Anthony Wills of Houston, was selected and this time the portrait was accepted, but not, however, before Cox showed his portrait of Kissinger to the press.

"I think I have the doors locked against that kind of thing happening again," said Conger, who now demands that an unacceptable portrait be destroyed or painted over. The artist is paid for his or her expenses, not full commission.

Usually a painting is done in four to six sittings which last two or three hours a week. The State Department budgets about \$10,000 for each secretary's portrait.